

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

5.1. Conclusion

The result of this study reveals the beliefs of Confucians Chinese-Indonesian in Semarang with regard to death rituals. As has been said by Arnold Van Gennep, translated from Monika Vizedom and Gabrielle L. Caffee, someone's life is filled with many transitions, from young to old, single to couple, and even live to die. Death, however, is one of those rite passages. It becomes an important one because death is the last main stage that separates the moment between the living and the dead. Nevertheless, there is Confucianism religion that strongly emphasizes on honoring ancestors or the deceased. These things are shown by some actions such as giving offerings (*sesajen*), praying to *Thian* (*sembahyang*), and all of those summarized under what we called as "ritual".

Death ceremonies, mainly for Confucians, are carried out in two different places, funeral home and cemetery or crematorium. *Pai Kui* toward the coffin, *Jiep Bok*, *Moy Song*, *Sang Cong* are four rituals done in the funeral home, and *Jiep Gong* is the last ritual before the dead is either buried or burned. Each ritual has its special prayer read out by the religious leader. The content of the prayer is for the deceased to be able to reach the hands of God or *Thian* and to be able to rest peacefully in the new realm. The prayer also strengthens the bereaved families with the promise that every person at time will back to his original place. Basically these five rituals can be attended by all people, especially the close-knit family. Each of them is well organized, planned to do at a specific time and publicly announced.

Funeral organizer usually has a written board filled with information for public of the series of ceremonies that will be held at the funeral home or later in cemetery or crematorium. Therefore, Confucianism's death rituals are considered to High Context Rituals.

Those rituals are accompanied by what we called "ritual objects" that are actually full of meaningful and superstitious meanings. Their functions are basically supporting the implementation of each ritual. The Confucians believe that things such as *Sio Gim* and paper house miniature need to be burned with the intention of providing supplies for the deceased in the new realm. Additionally, food, snacks, fruits, and drinks are ought to be prepared as well because Confucians believe that the spirit of the deceased is still living on earth, so that he still needs eating, drinking, snacking, and even showering. The selection of food and snack are not perfunctory, but there are some provisions that must be remembered. Most of the selected food are Semarang's typical food that is usually also served in Chinese celebration events, such as *Ca Bung*, Chicken Stew with Aromatic Coconut Gravy, and Spicy Sweet Chicken Liver Saute. However, there is another opinion that the choice of food is free; based on the daily food that is usually eaten by the deceased. For the snacks, some traditional snacks like *Wajik* and *Kue Mangkok* are also good choices because they symbolize unity and prosperity in a family. On fruits, according to three interviewees' opinion, the best fruits are apple, plantain, pear, watermelon, pineapple, and longan.

For Confucians, the implementation of rituals, in this context death ritual, and preparing ritual objects, are forms of faith towards Confucianism teachings as

well as respect and honor for the deceased. Particularly if the deceased is a parent, then the children have to prepare and carry out everything related to the rituals as sign of their devotion. Moreover, as one of the interviewees expressed, rituals done for preserving tradition, in this case among Chinese ethnic group, are passed down from one generation to the next generation. Therefore, many rituals still exist until this modern era. By doing some sacred ways like rituals they are showing to the world their identities. According to the writer's observation, death rituals that are done as well as the prayers that are delivered to *Thian* (God) strengthen the kin or the bereaved families. The prayer read by the *Wen Shi* contains sentences that console and confirm the families that the deceased has finished his duties in this world and ready to be back to the hands of God so they do not need to be sad anymore.

5.2 Suggestion

The writer suggests that a further research on the similarities and differences of death rituals existed among Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucianism because these three beliefs are often considered as the same one. This thesis can be used as a reference to find out the similarities and differences of the rituals. Another suggestion is that there should be a research on other rituals like marriage rituals.